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S E C R E T ROME 004580

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/RPM AND PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/30/2014

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [AF](#) [IT](#) [NATO](#) [AFGHANISTAN](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: ITALIANS COMMITTED ON PRT/FSB,
CONSIDERING SOF REQUEST

REF: A. A) STATE 251753

[B](#). B) STATE 251327

[C](#). C) ROME 3849

[D](#). D) ROME 2913

[E](#). E) ROME 2122

Classified By: POL M/C TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#). (S) Polmilcouns conveyed Ref A and B points to MFA NATO Office Director Brauzzi November 29, and, along with DATT, discussed them with Deputy Chief of Defense Castagnetti on November 30. Brauzzi said he would share them with Chief of Defense DiPaola on Nov. 30. On the PRT and FSB, Brauzzi noted that Italy planned to have its PRT forces in place in Herat by mid-March 2005 and the FSB by late March or early April. He noted that he thought the US should be making good-will gestures by placing US forces under ISAF without caveats, and was sorry to hear the Ref A point the US might pull back from that position if Stage II ISAF commitments did not meet US goals by January 20. He had no comment on the Ref B SOF request.

[2](#). (C) Castagnetti pointed out that once Defense Minister Martino told the press that Italy would send 200 soldiers for ISAF PRT/FSB work, Italy was committed to doing so. He said that in his personal view, who ever occupied the leadership should provide the helicopter assets. Italy was working hard to meet the helicopter and role 2 medical requirements but was facing serious problems doing so. Castagnetti is pushing the Italian Navy to come up with helicopters (he said the Navy helos were better protected and operate better at high altitude) but they would require support on the ground that Italy cannot provide. He wondered if the US could provide ground support in this area. On medical requirements, Italy does not have military surgeons or anesthesiologists. In Iraq they are using Red Cross volunteers, and they are not getting new volunteers to step forward so cannot use the same model for ISAF. They can put a role 1 plus facility with a C-130 for medevac, but, Castagnetti emphasized, to do it right and provide the required flexibility/mobility, helicopters are "a must."

[3](#). (C) Italy, Castagnetti reported, is also looking at other places it might be able to draw down military commitments less urgently needed to free up assets for the PRT/FSB work. He cited Albania, and said that if SHAPE decided a NATO HQ was no longer needed in Albania, that would help free up some Italian assets. (He conceded that Greece would oppose such a decision.)

[4](#). (C) Castagnetti told us that the Italian Ambassador in Kabul had gone to Herat with a military advance team, but Rome did not yet have the trip report. Another Italian reconnaissance team will travel there in early December and Rome hopes to have both reports by December 15, after which they will have a more clear idea of what they need to do to for both the PRT and the FSB.

[5](#). (S) On SOF, Castagnetti said IDGS would study the US request and see what Italy could do. It would be much easier for Italy to take a decision on SOF for Afghanistan, he said, if there was a clearly visible connection to an OEF/ISAF toward a OEF one.

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